UNDER STANDING THE GREEK FAMILY IN AUSTRALIA

A review of sociological studies and their implications for the helping professions.

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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the relevant literature and attempts to highlight the implications of the research findings of Social Network Analysis for understanding the Greek family in Australia, with particular emphasis on its relevance for practitioners in the "helping" professions.

The author is concerned with the paucity of information available to practitioners in the field in the variety of settings where immigrant families seek personal help, and believes that the lack of such information lends itself to reinforcing, rather than eliminating, stereotypes and to inappropriate intervention in the lives of Greek immigrant families. The paper also highlights the need to understand Greek immigrant families within the context of the host community and to consider factors with regard to family functioning, that are common to all families.

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INTRODUCTION

Bardis (1) presents the 'usual family type' stereotype view of the Greek family when he quotes from Ernest Burgess who argues that the following features are typical:-
1. "marriage a status of reciprocal rights and duties
2. marriage arranged by parents (or by young people in accordance with parental standards of mate selection).
3. separation of children and youth of different sexes before marriage or only formal relations under strict chaperonage
4. love after marriage
5. emphasis upon economic and legal aspects of marriage
6. evaluation of children as potential workers and economic assets
7. marriage relatively indissoluble" (P23)

This rural family type may exist in the Australian community today, but by virtue of its new urban status, and its loosening from its previous network, changes are inevitable. It is necessary to view the Greek family as undergoing a dynamic change over time, through generations and to look at the changes occurring as a consequence of the life stage it is passing through. A study of Social Network Analysis allows us to do this.

Network Analysis, as developed by Gillian Bottomley and Fiona Mackie (2) in their Australian studies of the Greek family, overcome the limitations of other studies which do not focus on the Greek family in Australia (See Appendix A). They are ficussed on the Greek family in Australia and the theory used allows for an understanding of the dynamic nature of the Greek Family with the context of those processes common to all families.

The focus of this paper will be on these studies and network analysis. Reference will also be made to relevant studies emerging from the American scene. An attempt will be made to highlight those aspects which have implications for practitioners in the helping relationship.

SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS

Elizabeth Botts (3) study of Family and Social Network was a turning point in the study of the family. Elizabeth Bott concluded that the conjugal roles were a function of the network within which spouses were entwined. She argued that the roles of spouses, within the family, were directly influenced by the environment in which they lived. This social environment "consisted of a network of different relationships with

some persons and with social institutions"(p.XVI). For some families the network was a close knit one in which "their relatives, friends, neighbours, and sometime fellow workers, knew one another and often in these various categories were the same people" (p.XVI). Loose knit networks consisted of those relatives, neighbours, friends and fellow workers, who didn't know one another.

Conjugal Roles

The definition of conjugal roles was based on a degree of segregation (independence) and Elizabeth Bott concluded that the more close knit the network the more highly segregated the conjugal roles (that is, exchange of duties and co-operation).

She argued that "if both husband and wife come to marriage with close knit networks, and if conditions are such that the previous pattern of relationship is continued, the marriage will be superimposed on these pre-existing relationships, and both spouses will continue to be drawn into activities with people outside their own elementary family" (p.60). Marriage brought together kin groups rather than individuals.

Loose Knit Networks

In her Reconsiderations Elizabeth Bott draws attention to the development of her theory to study the development and impact of loose knit networks on families (p.125). She refers too to the usefullness of the theory for understanding ethnic groups in different social situations (p.311). Doris Seder Jacobson (4) did follow up this hypothesis in her study of second generation Greeks in America finding that Greek couples, close to their ethnic culture and kin did carry out household chores, child care and financial decisions in a segregated manner.

To understand social network analysis, and its relationship to studying the family, one needs to emphasize that Elizabeth Bott found it fruitful to view the family not as a group, within a particular community, but as a network of relationships.

A useful description of Network Analysis is that presented by Mitchell (5). Barnes, notes Mitchell, introduced the concept of social network in 1954 when he felt it was a useful way of understanding the social behaviour of the parishioners in Bremnes, Norway. Barnes used this approach to interpret social action (p.5). Mitchell points out that the "Social Network may be used to interpret behaviour in a wide variety of social situations and clearly are not limited to the study of conjugal roles alone" (p.7).

In describing the characteristics of social networks Mitchell points out that the studies, using this concept, "Have concentrated on the nature of the links among people in the network as being the most significant features" (p.6).

Network

The study of a network necessitates that a part of the network be selected for a purpose and that a particular individual be selected as a first point of reference or "anchor point". (p.13). From this individual those others "reachable" from him are determined (p.15). Some may be reached directly others through intermediaries (p. 15 & 16). Such links may be "channels for the transmission of information including judgements and opinion, especially when these serve to reinforce norms and bring pressure to bear in some specified person". (p.17). **Density** describes "the extent to which links which could possibly exist among persons do in fact exist". (p.18). The range of contacts refers to the actual numbers of contacts any anchor person in effect has.

The above features are described by Mitchell to be the **Morphological criteria** of Social Network. These are to be distinguished from the Interactional criteria which refers to the behaviour of individuals within the "shape" of their network (p.20).

Interaction

The context of this interaction refers to such aspects as economic assistance, kinship, obligation and so on (p.20). The context is not "directly observable" but "must be inferred by the observer" (p.22). If there is a lack of reciprocity within the interaction then it is important to understand the directedness of the interaction (p.24). The durability of the network is indicated by "the recognition by people of sets of obligations and rights in respect of certain other identified people"(p.26). Of particular relevance to the immigrant situation is the notion of intensity of interaction which refers to the degree to which individuals are prepared to honour obligations or feel free to exercise the rights implied in their link to some other person"(p.27). Mitchell points out that, unlike the notion of intensity, the frequency of interaction can be quantified.

Emphasis is placed on the method of direct observation of social networks and Mitchell points out that the study of personal networks has been used to study the flow of communication and then later the flow of goods and services (p.36,38).

SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS — AUSTRALIA — THE GREEK FAMILY

Jean Martin appears to be the first sociologist to apply social network analysis in Australia (6). In her earlier studies (1967, 1970) she takes up a number of the themes as described above. She too emphasises, like Elizabeth Bott, that it

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is the network rather than the group which gives us a clear understanding of the family and says that to study any particular problem it is essential to select relevant relationships from any total network.

The network approach also reveals that "the family" is not an isolated unit, but is linked to society through kin. Her 1967 study is of Adelaide and of Extended Kinship Ties. A number of her findings, in this study, are relevant to understanding immigrant families. She found, for instance, that while British studies of the working class women found the women to be the key pivot to kin contact and that the mother-daughter tie was stronger than the kin contact of men, that this was not so.

Both husbands and wives were in close contact with their parents.

Dunkas and Nickelly (7) develop this theme when they discuss the relationship between the Greek mother and her daughter, who migrates to America. They found a high rate of mental illness in these Greek females thought to result from their traumatic break from their mothers.

Relevant Finding

Another relevant finding emerging from the Adelaide study is that although kin may be physically distant with the result that the number of actual contacts declines, the duration of contacts lengthened when in fact contact was made. Jean Martin also explores the variable of the life cycle, number of chldren in the family and social participation. Under the latter heading she discusses the traditional sociological theory which postulated "the growth of voluntary organisations" as a neutral outcome of the decline of kinship ties, and she points out that "British and American studies indicate that in established working class urban group kin relationships provide all that is needed by way of companionship and social life, for women in particular, both friends and participation in formal association are redundant". (p.59).

While no conclusive statements about the above points are made by Jean Martin, she does state that "there are well-recognised conventions by which families of all class levels, but particularly the families in the middle class and established working class, are able to maintain harmonious relationships with kin, neighbours and friends of diverse class background". (p.60). The kin act as a very important reference point to families, and in times of adversity the bonds with kin are strengthened. It is important to emphasise that her study focussed on a community consisting of Australian and immigrant families. She was not describing Greek or "Immigrant" families which tend to be viewed as being the only families with kin!!

Jean Martin

Jean Martin develops her 1967 study in her 1970 discussion of Community and Network (8) and her findings, relevant to this present discussion, indicated that although for many families kin provided "persisting links into the society around them. . .it was also apparent that the parents. . .interviewed, particularly those well provided with relatives were highly selective in their interaction and kindred, near or remote." (p.313). More importantly, this work indicated that families were aware that their own values were not "necessarily reinforced by other institutions of society". (p.331).

Immigrant

Of European immigrant families in this study, Jean Martin states ". .the increasing number of European immigrants in the district provided mostly negative — or at best neutral models — because the women worked, more than one family sometimes occupied a single dwelling, and they were in general believed to be interested only in money making and to have no sense of responsibility to school, church or community". (p.319).

These descriptions form the basis of work undertaken by Fiona Mackie and Gillian Bottomley. Both sociologists undertook major studies of Greeks for post-graduate work, and they have subsequently published papers on aspects of and developments from their initial work.

Research

Fiona Mackie reformulated her original thesis (9) realising that her research did not allow for an understanding of the diversity of experience that makes up the life context of different Greek immigrants. Her original research had attempted to understand the Greeks in the Victorian community by studying the Greek Church split as it influenced Greeks in Richmond. According to her discussion she relied heavily on statistics, but in retrospect, feels that she would have done better to move away from a structural approach and to focus on the perception of those labelled as "immigrants". She therefore turned to network analysis which allowed her to plot the relationship of any one Greek individual. This would not assume, but rather discover whether the individual belonged to a group with organisational ties. She points out in this evaluative paper that her previous research was ethnocentric in approach involving assimilationist expectations. She felt that such a sociological approach to understanding "the immigrant" needed to be questioned. For instance, she points out that as an Australian researcher, she assumed that Greeks had to choose between being Australian (assimilating) or being Greek, but found rather that:-

"This is a paradox that many Greeks who by any standards, including that of their own perception of themselves, are very Australian, are also by many standards very "Greek" and do not perceive their position as requiring a choice between the two." (p.152).

Her subsequent work, published in 1975, takes up this aspect in that it studies cultural change using network theory as the research tool. She set out to learn whether there was anything characteristic in the pattern of social relationship that differentiated them from others who did not undergo such cultural change, she further wanted to determine whether it was helpful to think of such a cultural change in terms of moving away from Greek towards Australian values.

Informal

Accepting that a person's informal contacts could be seen to form 'networks' rather than groups she assumed that "an immigrant who had no informal contact with Australians but was nevertheless undergoing cultural change, would be one whose sense of belonging and of sharing values lay outside the span of his most frequent interaction". (p.73). Aiming to look at value change and the accompanying pattern of social relationships, Fiona Mackie set out to measure a Greek individual's informal network, his sense of belonging, his attitudes and the extent to which he felt these attitudes to be shared by other members of his network and so on. She realised that an important variable in isolating differences in the network patterns, of those undergoing cultural change, with those not undergoing such a process would be the stage of the family life circle. Her paper presents a detailed analysis of findings here. She expected too that there would be a difference in the cultural change experienced by those who were part of a close knit network, as compared to those in a loose-knit one.

Emphasise

It is important to emphasise that Fiona Mackie soon realised that tracing a network from a Greek individual pivot was inapplicable for

it was more relevant to look at the Greek nuclear family as the pivot. She notes ". . .it is characteristic of Greek culture that the conception of 'self' is not as isolated from the family as in Western industrialised societies." (p.79). This is a point also made by Eva Isaacs in her book Greek Children in Sydney (11) (p.4). "It became obvious to me that the stress is on the family rather than the child, and that he is looked upon as an extension of the family".

Value Changes

From this Fiona Mackie argued that it was children who introduced value changes. Thus her detailed analysis of the developmental family life stages indicated above. She found an overwhelmingly important kinship pattern in all the Greek networks she studied, and few loose knit networks, concluding that any major cultural change in Greek immigrant families takes place within the nuclear family networks as a result of the dialogue of values "occasioned by the presence in these networks of people who are adopting, some Australian customs, notably the children". (p.106). She notes too, that kin, rather than friends are usually the most important part of an individual's network and that as a consequence cultural change takes place within the context of kin rather than leading away from them.

Second Generation

Gillian Bottomley's work focused on second generation Greeks in Sydney (12,13,14,15,16). Her findings not her research methods, will be outlined here. In her 1974 study Gillian Bottomley points out that while kinship ties may be less authoritative now than they are in Greece there was nevertheless a "clear common understanding as to the obligation of kinship" (p.9) to the point that migrants set up new institutions in the new environment

that bore some relationship to the pre-migration stage. In setting up a study to see whether those kinship traditions persisted beyond the first generation of immigrants she found that in fact they did, and that "in general, the kin system of these subjects appeared to have greater range and depth, than those recorded in most studies of Western industrial societies. Kin also played a greater part in their lives than might be expected in a large industrial city . . . Even, where the house was not shared, families sometimes formed a kind of residential cluster. . ." (p.11). The practice of 'godparents', christening offspring was seen in this study to reinforce existing kinship ties. A most important finding was that of kin being not only important because of their social interaction but because they were a resource to other families within the same network.

Interesting Parallel

An interesting parallel to Elizabeth Bott's findings is the finding that "In general, those informants with a large kin universe adhered more closely to tradition. . .(p.11). In fact Gillian Bottomley goes on to look at sex roles differentiation within the family in her subsequent studies. In her 1974 discussion (p.12) she also indicates that an important change within the Greek family is the nature of the father's authority.

Sex Roles

In another paper published in 1974 (18) Gillian Bottomley analyses the Greek sex roles in looking at the "ideal, expectations and action" and drawing comparison with Greece. She argues that despite the apparent domination of the male in the traditional family structure the female holds a great deal of informal power, which is lost as a result of migration. One wonders, when thinking of Elizabeth Bott's findings and the discussion by Dunkas and Nickelly (19) whether

this occurs because of the loosening of the close-knit network through which presumably this informal power would be exercised. From observations and experience in the field it could be said that there is some evidence to suggest that Greek males in Australia and in the early migration stage do in fact enter a joint role relationship with their wives, this occurs particularly as a consequence of the wife working and has implications for the conjugal role relationships. This seems to be so, particularly in relationships where the couple may not have a closely accessible supportive kinship network. Gillian Bottomley concludes this paper on sex roles with the observation that a "Traditional Greek Ideology is sustained by many families" and that the two variables that "influence the distribution of authority in the Greek urban setting" are the husband's ideas about authority, and wife's control of economic resources. The level of education within families did not seem to be an important variable.

In subsequent papers (20) Gillian Bottomley seems to have focused her interesteds on similar aspects as Fiona Mackie. In the first paper to be discussed here Gillian Bottomley refers to the 'layered' feature of large kin groups (21) (p.11). She developed this notion in 1975 (22), saying of the second generation Greek scene:-

"These communities have now developed layers within which subsequent generations can be accommodated. In most cases, layering creates flexibility within the community, what Fiona Mackie has called "a dialogue of values" takes place where younger males of a network are at variance with their elders, they can usually find either support or example within their own age groups. That is, there are role models available whose attitudes can be evaluated by all members of the community.

Her 1976 (23) discussion of ethnicity and identity affirms Fiona Mackie's finding that an Australian identity does not develop at the expense of the Greek one, or vice versa in fact "most subjects had created a synthesis of British-Australian and Greek cultural influences that allowed them considerable flexibility in coping with the different requirements of their various roles." This flexibility, according to the 1975 (14) discussion, allows for a constant "two-way movement for certain advantages." An understanding of the "identity" of the "ethnic professional" derived from such a second generational layer and the implications for his work with newly-recently arrived Greek immigrants could be developed from such an approach. In this paper Gillian Bottomley illustrates how effectively social Network Analysis can be used to understand these social processes that influence identity formation. These have repercussions for change within the family itself.

AMERICAN STUDIES OF THE GREEK FAMILY:

American studies of Greeks in America by Kouvetaris (24) and Tavuchis (25) which use Network Analysis, provide further interesting insights into the Greek second generation. Both studies seek to examine second generation change. For instance, work by Evangeline Mistaras, quoted in Kouvetaris (p.30) found that second generation Greek men are more likely to move away from the Greek norms than second generation Greek women.

Overall Kouvetaris' working hypothesis is that as one moves from the first generation of the Greek immigrant to that of the American-born second generation, one finds a change in status which reflects the status system of the larger American society. That is, second generation couples pursue a style of life more closely related to the norms of the larger American

society even though they may not be structually assimilated (p.60). This certainly appears to be the direction of Fiona Mackie' and Gillian Bottomley's findings.

Interestingly, Kouvetaris observes that first generation Greek immigrants are the most likely to be in poverty and that both "poverty and public aid for Greeks are looked upon as inexcusable and those who fall into this category are considered unfortunate or indolent" (p.68).

Tavuchis also focuses on social mobility and second generation families, but attempts to show how the kinship patterns of the traditional society are maintained. He states:-

"In general we will argue that there is little to support the hoary contention that rapid upward mobility necessarily weakens links between kin in urban areas or that it is incompatible with the extended kin orientations" (p.66). Tavuchis confirms this viewpoint by studying male relationships and, for example, gives an account of care for the elderly similar to that outlined by Townsend (26). That is, institutionalisation of the elderly by Greek families is avoided at all costs and seen as a last option when all else fails.

Tavuchis provides us with a wealth of information which indicates that role expectations remain essentially traditional in that, for example, at times of crisis kin are expected to provide assistance. So the brother, who in traditional village life may have postponed his own marriage to provide dowries for sisters, in second generation immigrant families, may not do so, but would be expected to intervene and assist if his sisters were experiencing marital problems, or became widowed.

Tavuchis indicates that like 'numerous empirical studies. . .documented the exchange of personal services between

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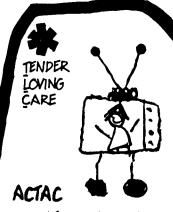## **C**HOOSE TV PROGRAMS WITH YOUR CHILD!

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members of family networks in urban settings is extensive, and a major form of contact between kinsmen". He points out that "our own data are in agreement with these findings and in addition suggested that certain kinds of services tend to be sex-linked and others age-linked" (p.114).

Implications of Social Network Analysis Findings for Practitioners in the Helping Relationship

Attempts to highlight the cultural uniqueness of the ethnic groups in Australia, both by Australian and ethnic group professionals often seem to stereotype migrant families, or to deny any similarities with families in the host community. These are dangerous extremes as was highlighted in the Cox Culture controversy (27).

Intervention and the Greek Family;

In its usual habitat the nuclear family is surrounded by a web of familial and social structures which provide it with emotional support, act as a transmitter of values, and expectations of the family, and assist in dealing with normal life stages and life crises, and generally provide it with its place in society.

These are their :-
1. Nuclear family
2. Extended family
3. Friends and acquaintances
4. Community support systems, e.g. doctors, teachers, ministers of religion.
5. The total Australian community
6. The total country of origin community.

When the nuclear family emigrates from its place of origin, these supporting structures may appear to be lost. This happens when a family moves from place to place within the same country. The loss may appear to be more severe where inter-country migration occurs for then the geographical distance precludes even irregular contact with the original support systems.

At the same time, it is more difficult to adapt to the new country's systems due to the greater differences in life-style. In fact, social network analysis findings indicate that the form rather than the delivery of contact changes, and family members are experiencing a number of role changes which can significantly change the expectations that professionals may have if they rely on traditional stereotypes as presented by Bardis (29).

Leichter and Mitchell (30) argue that the importance of kin needs to be considered both at a diagnostic and intervention level (p.202-3). There is a lack in our knowledge of the importance of Greek kin in both these areas, although we have some indication of that importance.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER:
Contact with kin in country of origin

..Bearing in mind that when a family migrates it is the **form** of contact rather than the **importance** of contact that changes, it is essential to consider the impact of this contact on family need. More than likely the immeidate practical supports that can be provided by the extended family ties may be lacking and contacts will need to be made with outside community agencies in the manner described by Jean Martin (31) and Shiela Shaver (32).

Ill health

In times of ill-health, injury, crisis, etc., when the emotional support of extended kin is not available it may mean that the family is eager to return to their home country to seek advice, comfort and support, e.g. when a family has a retarded child. It may also mean that families who feel their current situation stigmatizes or shames them will withdraw further into isolation and avoid communicating with kin in their country of origin. For exam-

ple, the Greek father of a deaf child was reluctant to return to Greece, or to let his relatives know of his hardship saying that "Greeks thrive on another's misfortune".

INVOLVEMENT OF KIN IN THE HOST COUNTRY

Choldin (33), writing on Kinship Networks in the Migration Process in the United States and England, notes that :

1) "the extended family persists in industrial settings in terms of continual interaction among kinfolk of different generations:

2) strong affective ties exist among its members, and

3) the members perform various services for one another" (p.163).

They state that far from destroying the kinship networks the chain migration process may allow for the "network to be re-established in a new community." One of the activities that members of the network perform is assisting other members in the migration and settlement process, an activity which may tend to support the vitality of such networks (p.175).

Leichter and Mitchell (34), discussing kinship and casework in the Jewish context, make an extremely important point when they draw attention to the Anglo-Saxon expectation that kin have nothing but negative contributions to make to a marital relationship. They say:

". . .Various types of activity with kin must be differentiated before concluding that extensive kin involvement places a strain on the marital relationship. For some clients it may be inappropriate to apply the more general cultural assumption that it is desirable to work toward a "close: marital bond, for exam-

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ple, a bond kinship system that stresses the mother-daughter tie may be most congenial for some'' (p.273).

So it may be the case that any practitioner intervening for example, in a marital situation should seek to include rather than exclude kin and others, e.g. Koumbari (Godparents) considered to be outsiders by the ''middle class Anglo-Saxon''. In the situation of adolescent immigrant girls experiencing problems with parents, there is a strong feeling against both family and relatives expressed by Australian teachers, social and welfare workers and often attempts are made to 'protect' the girl from her family! Unless the situation is extremely serious, such as a threat to life, intervention should be avoided or at least be minimal, kind should be allowed to work things out in their own way. Often the effect the outsider has on the situation is to exacerbate it to the degree where the girl is felt to be a 'victim' rather than 'loved one'. This could be avoided if the girl was helped to accept the importance of the family to her future within the culture.

In terms of home visiting of Greek families, it should be accepted that kin members may present to the interviewer and expect to actively participate in discussions and decision making. This may be a particularly difficult situation to accept, particularly if the expectation is to deal with those individuals directly involved in the situation under discussion, and when the rights of the individual are an issue.

SEEKING HELP:

The findings of Network Analysis indicate the importance Greek families place in finding solutions to problems within their kin group, rather than turning to friends, particularly non-Greek friends.

However, in seeking to accentuate immigrant differences it is easy to consider that they share little in common with their host community. Baker's (35) discussion of the pre-contact stage to seeking help indicates that this is common to all those seeking help (See also discussion by Mayer & Timms (36), Jean MARTIN (37), and Sheila Shaver (38). Research by Jean Martin (39) in Victoria, found that recently arrived Greek families had kin who told them where the schools were and acted as interpreters (p.194). That is, such families were able to call on friends, kin and fellow-workers to provide information and, where necessary, provide the links between the family and the bureaucracy required whether it be in the education, health or welfare sector. Such people were termed ''linkage agents'' consisting of a ''network'' of ''friends, kin and other personal contacts, as well as the officials of formal associations or organisations.'' For those without kin contacts the 'stranger' who becomes a linkage agent is crucial as the discussion by Sheila Shaver on ''Helping People in Difficulty — the Caretaker'' (4) indicates.

Sheila Shaver refers to the ''local welfare network. . .composed of links between its individual members. These links have been termed caretakers, individuals encountering facets of clients' personal problems which they cannot deal with themselves. . .'' (p.64). As highlighted by this discussion (p.87-8) this is the basic service delivery pattern to Greeks. The development of the Australian Greek Welfare Society can be viewed as an attempt to institutionalise such informal links and in view of the lack in general community services, could also be viewed as **relying heavily** on such networks to help individuals.

A concern expressed by Sheila Shaver is whether or not, from a policy viewpoint, to encourage or

displace such linkage agents or caretakers. For example, the ''Banks' migrant information officers who have been very successful in drawing trade to the banks by filling gaps in the welfare system'' albeit inappropriately (p.107). The central thesis being that such individuals often have reactionary views of welfare. This is certainly of great concern, and needs further research.

RELATIONSHIP OF FAMILY WITH THE HOST COMMUNITY

Doris Seder Jacobson (41) stresses the clinical implications of the findings of the study on ''The Influence of Cultural Identification on Family Behaviour'' stress in relation to marital relationships the strains that develop, depending upon the degree that one or other partners moves towards the American patterns of behaviour. Presumably too, this would depend on the emotional impact that a breakaway from close kin contact has on either or both partners. That is, whether it results in a significant reciprocal marital role relationship or not. For example, the discussion of Dunkas & Nickelly (42) and Cox (43) suggest that the strains for the Greek women are extremely intense. The Jacobson study found that there was a high frequency of contact between a Greek mother and her married daughter in America. This study also highlights the strain experienced by Greek families in the process of change, and this is particularly important to consider in relation to second generation Greeks.

CONCLUSION:

No doubt over zealous practitioners intent on assimilating Greek families into the Australia community and encouraging individuality will tend to ignore the important findings of both Gillian Bottomley and Fiona Mackie relating to the

ethnic identity process, whereby individuals appear to have no difficulty in maintaining both Greek and Australian identities. These discussions are important as they show that ethnic identity change is a process occurring over time and shaped by earlier generational layers which provide appropriate "role models".

It is clear that what may be viewed by Australian "helping practitioners" as a negative "force" against change, that is, the traditional Greek family as an institution; contains the seeds of change within it, and strategies of intervention need to be directed inwardly toward the family as a whole.

This is not to argue for the status quo though. The extreme restrictiveness of a Greek father who may examine his daughter physically to affirm her virginity and who precludes her from mixing with the opposite sex may indeed be viewed as excessively restrictive. However, Gillian Bottomley and Fiona Mackie have shown that practitioners need to turn to the kin in the family's network to find the acceptable 'role model' through which they can work to assist the adolescent in such a culture conflict situation.

It is also clear that the Greek family cannot be viewed in a static stereotyped way. The practitioner needs to carefully assess whether the traditional family type of the Greek family is a useful baseling for understanding the particular family they are working with. If it is not then the practitioner would do well to turn to the sociological literature which focuses attention on the Greek family life experience in Australia.

APPENDIX A.

Studies of the Greek family are varied in their use of methods. Research by Safilios-Rothschild (1) examines the decision making patterns within the family by obtaining responses from husbands and wives and drawing comparisons with other countries. Another study, by the same author and Potamiamou (2) focuses on the interaction between the parent and child. The Vassilious' (with others) (3) have published a number of studies on the Greek family based on a psychodynamic approach. The dowry, relevant to the establishment of the Greek family in traditional society, is analysed from an institutional approach by Lambrini-Dimaki (4), Bardis (5), reviewed the changing family in Modern Greece indicating that in 1955 "the conservative and authoritative nature of family was disappearing under the influence of expanding industry, urbanisation, improved transportation, communism and war."

The direct applicability of such studies to an immigrant situation is questionable and studies developed in the immigrant context are emerging (6). A study of Dunkas and Nickelly (7) on the adaptive process of married Greek female immigrants in America is psychodynamic in approach. A discussion by Cox (8) of psychiatric illness in Greek immigrant women in Victoria uses a descriptive case study approach. Both approaches are useful in understanding aspects of Greek Family Life in Australia and the stresses resulting from immigration; but neither approach allows for a full understanding of the dynamics of change that occurs to the Greek family as a result of migration.

Two studies by Sarantakos (9) discusses the Greek family in the context of, in one instance, theory of "illegal family forms" and the pattern of divorce in the other. This approach is useful. It develops a view of the Greek family which places it into a broader context of understanding of "the family". It emphasises similarities in patterns of "the family" rather than dissimilarities. In current discussions of the immigrant family undue stress is placed on stereotyped views of differences.

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These discussions stress the need to develop an understanding of families from different ethnic backgrounds within the context of their experiences in their immediate social structure. It is argued that this approach moves away from the presentation of the ethnic family in a pathological model.

35

If your child is handicapped, he needs all the help he can get.

You, the parent, can help him the most by

- Having positive attitudes about him and his abilities.

- Knowing what services he may need, and where to obtain them;

- Knowing how to help him learn at every opportunity;

The handicapped child can overcome, if you teach him how.

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